

Lunch Speaker

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John Wilkins-Wells is Assistant Professor, Senior Research Scientist, in the Department of Sociology at Colorado State University. He currently generates 100% of his own faculty appointment funding through competitive grants and domestic and international consulting. He has held his position at Colorado State University since 1986. He is active in: 1) international development projects in agriculture; 2) water resource issues in the West, and 3) teaching. He is currently principal investigator for several research and extension-type projects involving issues facing canal companies and irrigation districts in the Rocky Mountain Region.

Abstract of presentation:

Recent research conducted by the Sociology Water Lab at Colorado State University and funded by the Bureau of Reclamation has focused on a nexus of related issues having to do with water conservation and the future of agricultural water supplies in arid lands. These include: 1) documenting the rising costs of irrigation canal management due to urban encroachment, and what to do about it, 2) documenting recent trends in the dollar investment that growers have made to improve their on-farm irrigation technologies, and the value of this investment in terms of the public's concern about the need for improved water conservation in irrigated agriculture, and, 3) identifying innovative ways to help finance the modernization of large irrigation canal systems to conserve more water in the future. These rather disparate research projects have led to some interesting conclusions about how we might strengthen what remains of our irrigated agriculture production system, and in a way that meets both agriculturalist and public interests effectively.